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ABSTRACT

In the Province of Quebec, and in particular on the island of Montreal, large communities of the French-speaking Quebecois majority and the English-speaking Quebecker minority have historically co-inhabited peacefully. There is, nonetheless, an ebb and flow in the conflict between the two languages. In recent years, the Government of Quebec has legislated mandatory use of French to promote Quebecois identity. To the English-speaking community, mandatory French has meant at times banning the English language. The reporting of language legislation of successive Quebec governments and the public reaction is known as the language portfolio. The study identified important differences in the treatment of the language portfolio between two prominent daily newspapers in Quebec: one French-language, the other English. To explore the differences, the same three stories were chosen from each. Each article was subjected to a content analysis to quantify the portion of fact and opinion. Then the articles were analyzed to determine how ideas were treated. This was accomplished by, most importantly, considering the journalistic approach in both French and English. At the same time, common rhetorical features shared in the discourse of the two languages were categorized and their contents contrasted for the intended impact on the reader. Among these rhetorical features were openings and closures, quotations, vocabulary, and dramatic devices, including hyperbole and irony. While front page stories in both newspapers were essentially factual, there were varying amounts of opinion in the English editorials (40-60%) and French editorials (50-60%). Analyzing the journalistic approach and rhetorical features of the two languages revealed important differences in impact. Whereas the English newspaper generally conveyed a message of "holding our own," the French newspaper conveyed a message of frustration that the majority view could not be respected. (Author/RS)

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Role of the Media in the Quebec Language Portfolio.

by Lorne O. Kirkwold

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Role of the Media in the Québec Language Portfolio *(abstract)*

In the Province of Québec, and in particular on the island of Montreal, large communities of the French-speaking Québécois majority and the English-speaking Québecker minority have historically co-inhabited peacefully. There is nonetheless an ebb and flow in the conflict between the two languages. In recent years, the Government of Québec has legislated mandatory use of French to promote Québécois identity. To the English-speaking community, mandatory French has meant at times banning the English language.

The reporting of language legislation of successive Québec governments and the public reaction is known as the language portfolio. The study identified important differences in the treatment of the language portfolio between two prominent dailies in Québec: one French-language, the other English. To explore the differences, the same three stories were chosen from each. Each article was subjected to a content analysis to quantify the portion of fact and opinion. Then the articles were analyzed to determine how ideas were treated. This was accomplished by, most importantly, considering the journalistic approach in both French and English. At the same time, common rhetorical features shared in the discourse of the two languages were categorized and their contents contrasted for the intended impact on the reader. Among these rhetorical features were openings and closures, quotations, vocabulary, and dramatic devices, including hyperbole and irony.

While front page stories in both newspapers were essentially factual, there were varying amounts of opinion in the English editorials (40 - 60%) and French editorials (50 - 60%). Analyzing the journalistic approach and rhetorical features of the two languages revealed important differences in impact. Whereas the English paper generally conveyed a message of "holding our own," the French paper conveyed a message of frustration that the majority view could not be respected.

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ROLE OF THE MEDIA IN THE QUÉBEC LANGUAGE PORTFOLIO

Introduction and literature review

The issue of language spread has been dealt with typically as status planning. Many studies discuss legislation intended to promote use of the language in question. A secondary consideration is corpus planning. It is typical to consider how a language is renewed in order to express the realities of contemporary life. This undertaking involves linguistic specialists who work jointly with the government, the primary agent for promoting language spread. Stressing the importance of the study of status planning over corpus planning, Fishman (1991), as an introduction to his Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (GIDS), asserts:

> We will be concerned with the role of each in RLS [reversing language shift], but with status planning first and foremost. (p. 81)

Nahir (1984) gives examples similar to Fishman's. An alternative approach is that of Lieberson (1981), who generalizes about language spread by considering historical events in international relationships between countries and trends in the world business community.

It is the object of this paper to consider if mass media can, like the government, be an agency of language spreading. Indeed, its role would be secondary to the government's, but could it nonetheless be an agent of language spread? Literature to date reveals a scanty consideration of the media's direct role in language spreading. Describing methods of determining language

shift, Fishman (1991) includes counting TV and radio stations as an alternative to counting populations. In the same way, the number of newspaper subscribers is presumably a measure of a linguistic community's viability. Describing the GIDS, he sees a place for the media in the upper stages of language promotion but cautions:

> We must not turn our backs on the media in the RLS struggle, but they are far from being cure-alls or even vitamins. (p. 404)

Instead, he stresses the significance of the community amassing its numbers through the interactions of daily life.

As for an approach focusing on the direct influence of the media as an agent of language spread, it may be instructive to consider Fleras' (1994) caution with respect to studies on racial representations in the media. The limitations of their content-analysis design are attributed to the method of counting certain occurrences in a given period of time. If these occurrences are merely pictures, then the reporting of such results provide little substantive information. Although this content analysis has been applied to minority women appearing in a popular Canadian magazine, advertisers using this method have rejected it.

Berry, Kalin, and Taylor (1977), in a study of reactions to ethnic groups by both French- and English-Canadians, found:

> Community centres and folk festivals were positively received, while respondents had reservations about third language teaching and broadcasting. (p. 248)

As a compromise position then, perhaps there would be general endorsement of knowing more about outgroups through the media of one's own language. This would be particularly germane in Québec

where the two major linguistic groups have ample access to information through media such as the radio, television, and newspaper.

At the same time, as Caldwell (1984) has argued, Anglo-Québec is a culture ambivalent about its being. If anglophones continue to identify with the mainstream culture outside the province, the prognosis for the community is that of a transient one. There will be no impetus to stay "except to administer the colony for Rome" (p. 214). Consequently, the anglophone community's numbers will eventually dwindle as its members progressively retreat into the homeland.

In the conflict between English-speaking Québeckers (henceforth Québeckers) and French-speaking Québécois (henceforth Québécois), each group respectively identifies with the remedy for language spread of the government it sees as the national government. For Québeckers, this is the Canadian federal government. On the other hand, most Québécois would probably identify with the Québec government as the symbolic head of their people. I concede the last statement is somewhat controversial, but as evidence, point to the analysis that 60% of Québécois voted yes in the 1995 referendum for sovereignty. Below are overviewed the two remedies prescribed by each government to the language conflict between English and French.

Federal perspective

In 1969, the Canadian government passed the Official Languages Act. This conferred equal status of both French and

English in all federal institutions. At the same time, it enshrined obligatory concurrent use of both languages in all documentation, especially legislation. Eventually, consistent language policies have also become part of Canadian crown corporations. The result of the Official Languages Act is to have increased the prestige of the language and people of the French-speaking minority across the country. Throughout Canada, services offered in French by federal agencies, including crown corporations such as the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, Air Canada, the National Film Board, along with the convention of bilingual labeling on virtually every consumer product, have raised awareness of the French fact.

This approach explains in part the success of immersion education across Canada. While the federal government has taken up the challenge of raising the prestige of the French language, the English-speaking provinces have been willing participants in promoting French-language spread through the provision of immersion education as a very popular alternative to conventional schooling. This perspective would probably be endorsed as a sufficient remedy by a majority of Québeckers.

Québec perspective

The Québec government has applied its own measures. Whereas the federal approach has been equality of English and French, the Québec approach aims to protect French from the influences of English outside the province. In 1977, the Québec Charter of the French Language made it the only official language of the

province. This law was conferred the status of a charter to emphasize the social implications of its implementation. To promote Québécois identity to the ingroup as well as newly arriving residents, it enacted a great degree of French unilingualism, particularly in government, business and education. The provisions of the Charter have been of such importance to the mainstream francophone community that the notwithstanding clause of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms has been evoked in order to render a higher status to the French-language Charter than the constitution of Canada.

There are many provisions of the French-language Charter related to the language of business. This is partially in recognition of the influence that companies and their advertising have on the *visage français* (linguistic ambiance). Companies are expected to receive francization certificates and report to government agencies with regard to these requirements. Daoust (1984) describes the rationale of promoting French in the workplace. In its current form, the French-language Charter allows commercial signs in other languages, as long as French accompanies predominately. This was not always the case. When adopted in 1977, Bill 101 (the original Charter) prohibited languages other than French, with exceptions for "the cultural activities of a particular ethnic group" and "foreign national specialities" (Québec statutes, Chapter C-11 [1977, c. 5, s. 61, s. 62]).

Stipulations of Bill 101 originally specified that every child must attend school in French, except those with historical

ties to the old-stock anglophone community of Québec. With the passage of Bill 86 in 1993, other children from Canada were allowed access to English schools.

When Bill 101 was adopted, four adjunct agencies were established at arm's length from the government, and this to ensure successful implementation of the Charter and protect it from political interference: (1) *l'Office de la langue française (OLF)*; (2) *La commission de la protection de la langue française (CPLF)*; (3) *La commission de la toponymie*; and (4) *Le conseil de la langue française (CLF)*. The functions of these agencies follow respectively: (1) to provide lexicon for business and technological innovations, and to implement francization "in the civil administration and business firms" (Québec statutes, Chapter C-11 [1977, c. 5, s. 100]); (2) to deal with complaints by the public about lack of service in French; (3) to set appropriate geographic names; and (4) to monitor the progress of the French language. Bill 86, amending the original charter, discontinued the *CPLF* and moved certain powers of the *OLF* to the government. The *OLF* was then intended to make verifications in the absence of the *CPLF*. A majority of French-speaking Québécois would probably endorse the approach of the French-language Charter for protection over that of federal bilingualism for equality.

Method / Events selected

The object of the study is to identify important differences in the treatment of the language portfolio (i. e. press coverage of language legislation and related events) between *The Gazette*,

the English-language daily of greatest circulation in Québec, and *Le Devoir*, a Québec French-language daily whose style would be comparable to *Le Monde*. To explore the differences, three stories related to the language portfolio were chosen from *Le Devoir*. A story was retained for analysis if a corresponding editorial could be found shortly after the appearance of the story. A further condition was that the same stories with corresponding editorials had to appear in *The Gazette*. As Rosenthal (1979) implies, continuity between news coverage and editorial columns cannot be expected systematically. The problem is compounded between newspapers and languages. What is news in English may not be in French. In the end, the events meeting these conditions were:

1. the tabling in the National Assembly of Bill 86 (May 6, 1993);
2. the Beaudoin communiqué of April 3, 1996;
3. the Fairview Mall demonstration for signs in English of April 18, 1996.

For each of these events, a brief chronology of each is presented below.

1. Tabling of Bill 86, May 6, 1993

As a result of challenges by the anglophone community, this legislation was intended to soften the French-language Charter, allowing bilingual commercial signs with some restrictions, notably the requirement of predominance of the French language. It was also intended to clear the way for Canadians from other provinces to enroll their children in English schools.

The bill was a culmination of three events. First, the previous amendment to the French-language Charter was Bill 178, which allowed bilingual signs only inside the premises of an establishment. Outside, merchants were required to use French exclusively. In order to adopt Bill 178, the Québec government had to evoke the notwithstanding clause of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Consequently, the French-language Charter was given precedence over provisions for freedom of expression in the Canadian constitution. The notwithstanding clause, however, must be evoked every five years in order to stand. In 1993, the renewal deadline was approaching. A decision on the part of the Québec government was required if it wished to maintain the *status quo*. Second, a United Nations committee had ruled against the Québec restrictions. The Liberal government was concerned about negative press abroad and therefore felt pressure to address the infringement. Third, the government was approaching the end of its mandate. The introduction of the bill was likely an attempt to rally the traditional support of the anglophone community.

2. The Beaudoin communiqué, April 3, 1996

A little over a year after the adoption of Bill 86, the Québec Liberal government was defeated by the Parti Québécois, whose platform included a referendum on succession. The referendum was held in the fall of 1995. During the campaign, the Yes Committee, essentially a coalition of provincial and federal sovereignist party members, made part of the platform the protection of the French-language and Québécois culture. To

achieve this end, the sovereignty of Québec, allowing the Québécois people autonomous jurisdiction of its own affairs, was promoted. The referendum question was defeated, but narrowly. Conceding defeat, then Premier Parizeau attributed the loss to "lack of money and the ethnic vote," and vowed revenge. Shortly afterwards, he stepped aside. The extremely popular Lucien Bouchard was quickly endorsed as leader by the Parti Québécois and became premier.

Then the rank and file made pressure on the government to tighten the existing language legislation, Bill 86. At the same time, the anglophone community, concerned with the influence of the "hard-liners" on the government, lost many of its hospitals through budget cuts in health. The loss of these institutions was symbolic for the anglophone minority. The prevailing mood was termed "Anglo angst," and many could be persuaded that they needed to do something other than rely on their tradition defender, Alliance Quebec. The government, realizing leadership on its part would be required, committed itself to a dialogue with the anglophone community during a speech given by Premier Bouchard in early 1996. A few weeks later, Louise Beaudoin, minister in charge of the French-language Charter held, with other prominent colleagues, a press release at which time public consultations were promised. The substance of the press release was, in short, proposing to maintain the current legislation, but to enforce it more strictly.

3. Fairview rally for signs in English of April 18, 1996

The third event is, in part, a reaction to the second. It was novel for it was the first time that the anglophone community of Québec resorted to a protest for language rights, a tactic more readily associated with Québécois nationalists. At issue was not only use of English signs in their own community, as the law allowed, but also, for the participants' morale, the demonstration was an affirmation of the community's vital presence. Symbolically this was very important since the major department stores who they were lobbying, Eaton's and the Bay, are icons of Canadian life. Until the demonstration, these stores' policy on the West Island of Montreal had been to post commercial signs in French only.

Analysis

Each article was subjected to a content analysis to quantify the portion of fact and opinion. Then the articles were analyzed to explain how ideas were treated. In particular, differences in intended reader impact were noted. This was accomplished by comparing typical discourse features of French and English journalism. For each feature, the effect on the reader was considered for the respective languages.

Results

To shed light on the issues raised above, the following point-by-point analysis will include a discussion of: (1) factual *vs.* opinionated content; (2) titles; (3) openings and closures;

(4) journalistic approach; (5) the place of the journalist's analysis; (6) quotations; (7) place of differing views; (8) vocabulary; and (9) reader impact. In the analysis of the editorials, the following points will also be analyzed: (10) factual *vs.* opinionated content; and (11) dramatic devices, including hyperbole and irony. The results are presented below in tabular format.

N E W S A R T I C L E S

		Gazette	*Le Devoir*
1.	Facts	100%	97 - 100%
2.	Titles	Neutral article summaries	Attention grabbers
3.	Openings/ Closures	Emotional sign posts	Emotional sign posts
4.	Journa-listic approach	Observable facts. "The truth is inherently obvious"	"Legalistic." Making a case for the client
5.	Place of writer's analysis	Setting the focus	Filling in. Setting the tone
6.	Quota-tions	Reliable source of authority	Showing lack of consis-tency, understanding, or fairness
7.	Place of differ-ing views	Expected ethical standard	Showing lack of consis-tency, understanding, or fairness
8.	Voca-bulary	Persuasion through emotionally charged imagery	Sarcasm by attributing hyperbole, especially the vocabulary of warfare, to the opponents
9.	Reader impact	"Holding our own"	Frustration that the majority view cannot be respected

E D I T O R I A L S

		Gazette	*Le Devoir*
10.	Portion opinion	40 - 60%	50 - 60%
11.	Dramatic devices	Sarcasm	Sarcasm

The ten points are discussed below at greater length.

(1) Factual *vs.* opinionated content in the news

The news coverage in both English and French is essentially factual. In isolation, each sentence is objective. There is one exception. In the reporting of the Beaudoin communiqué, the francophone journalist included one sentence out of 33 (approximately 3%) which is unquestionably subjective commentary on what he observes. More important than this quantitative analysis, however, is the arrangement of the facts, which influences the subjectivity and the impact on the intended audience. (See 4 below.) In fact, the tone of the corresponding editorial can be predicted from the initial news coverage.

(2) Titles

In *The Gazette*, the three stories are respectively entitled: (a) Government bill today allows bilingual signs, eases schooling rules; (b) Sign law to be enforced; and (c) 3000 rally for bilingual store signs. In *Le Devoir*, the titles could be

translated: (a) Law permits bilingualism everywhere; (b) No question of Québec going back to unilingual signs; and (c) Large demonstration in the west of Montreal in favor of bilingual signs.

The titles in English are neutral. They are intended as a brief summary of the articles. A subscriber following the language portfolio in the news will be drawn to the contents likely because of background knowledge and anticipation. The French ones are more likely intended to grab the immediate attention of the readership. In the case of the first *Devoir* title, "everywhere" implies that free use of English will be allowed. The mainstream Québécois reader will be weary for this seems to run contrary to the expected norm for a francophone majority seeking cultural protection. Headline 'b' seems to be a confirmation of 'a' even though the focus of the story is a more rigorous application of the French-language Charter. For title 'c' in French, the key word is "large," a translation of *imposante*, implying numbers which demand respect. While anglophone readers may be more subtly drawn to *The Gazette* headlines, francophones will be decidedly called to read the impending news.

(3) Openings / Closures

In both French and English, what is reported in the opening and closing lines sets the tone. Certain terms and expressions in the reporting serve as emotional sign posts. The *Gazette* writer, referring to the Fairview Mall demonstrators, reports in the first line: "They came . . . in search of some respect" (Seidman, 1996,

p. A1). "Respect" occurs in end focus position. She concludes the same article:

> Some in the crowd criticized Alliance Quebec for taking too soft an approach where English rights are concerned. (p. A2)

It can be inferred that the writer tactically approves of the community's actions for its members have waited patiently for nearly three years to stand up for what the law allows.

In French (Chartier 1996), the most obvious example of this device is the conclusion of the same story where a demonstrator is attributed with the provocation: Promoting your language is your business, but you don't need to make the rest of us use it. The intended reader will be struck by insolence as a lasting impression.

(4) Journalistic approach

It is likely this point which most strongly differentiates the news coverage of the two languages. In *The Gazette*, the arrangement of the presentation is "observable facts." The writers appeal to prestige by reporting no more than the observable. Since the truth is inherently apparent, value judgments are avoided in their description; they rely on the reader to draw the intended conclusion. In the Fairview coverage (Seidman 1996), the mission of saving the country is reported in the speech given by the organizer. At the same time, we observe members of a patient community who conduct themselves laudably. We make this inference through the observations she reports. Their actions are contrasted with those of the major department

stores, who have expressed their indifference towards the wishes of their customers.

In *Le Devoir*, the arrangement of the presentation is "legalistic." The writer assumes the role of a lawyer making a case for the client, who is the reader. Most typical of this style is the coverage of the Beaudoin communiqué (Venne, 1996, Apr 4), the credibility of which is challenged at length by the maze of contractions reported. For example, the government wants to re-inforce the French-language Charter; yet at the same time, a number of concessions to the business and anglophone community are reported. The minister has set a number of objectives to achieve her goals; however, she has not announced a budget for implementing these objectives. The writer reports that party members favor re-establishing unilingual sign regulations; however, the Premier himself claims not to want to make waves. Given the number of juxtapositions, the reader is intended to question the substance of the announcement. In this way, the journalists scrutinize the assumptions of the opposing views.

(5) Place of the journalist's analysis

Given the "factual" approach of the *Gazette* journalists, their analysis is sparing. Its purpose is to set the focus for the reader. In the reporting of the tabling of Bill 86, Authier (1993) mentions the end of the ban on English, although the proposed legislation is the focus. The effect is to remind the intended readers of the sacrifice they had made for 15 years. Concluding the article, the writer reports polls indicating

acceptance among Québec residents of bilingual signs. Furthermore, the U. N. ruling against the provincial sign law is also mentioned. The effect of these facts, although extraneous to the legislation, strictly speaking, is to vindicate the anglophone community.

In *Le Devoir*, the purpose of analysis is to fill in related information in order to present the news coverage with a perspective. Whereas *Gazette* journalists merely attempt to draw the reader's attention to information outside the immediate focus, in *Le Devoir*, the journalists incorporate this information conspicuously. It is the place of the francophone journalist to offer detailed perspective. This gives the reporting a tone of authority and allows the readers to make connections they may otherwise overlook. For example, in the *Devoir* coverage of the tabling of Bill 86, Venne (1993) mentions twice the great latitude which the new legislation gives the government. Many powers are delegated to the government and further adjustments need not be debated in the National Assembly. Within the latitude now available to the government is regulating how much instruction in languages other than French can be given in French schools. The reader infers that the amount of instruction in English can even be subject to the whim of the government, which may change the regulations at will. Not only is the situation unstable, but it feeds French-Canadians' traditional fear of being assimilated in school.

In his *Devoir* coverage of the Beaudoin communiqué, Venne (1996, Apr 4) attributes the desire for balance to the Premier,

and then asserts, as part of that balance, that the government hasn't forgotten the anglophone and business community. Beyond this balance, he reports the government has taken great care not to open new language legislation, apparently to avoid the issue.

(6) Quotations

In *The Gazette*, quotations are used as a reliable source of authority. In the coverage of the tabling of Bill 86, Authier (1993) contrasts the opinion of the minister in charge of the language portfolio, Claude Ryan, with that of Robert Libman from the Equality Party. With regard to freedom of expression, the minister is reported to have said:

> Once you recognize the right to free expression, it's possible to define some modalities within which it must be exercised (p. A2)

Robert Libman, whose party platform defends the rights of the English-speaking community, is attributed with the following quotation:

> You can be sure that as long as a perceived restriction remains it will be challenged before the courts, . . . I don't know why the government doesn't just close the door and allow bilingual signs all over. (p. A2)

The targeted audience is likely intended to identify with the second speaker. At the same time, the effect of using the minister's quotation as a foil achieves balance. *The Gazette's* journalists expect to make place for opposing views. In the second story, Authier (1996) names seven prominent sources for differing views on the Beaudoin communiqué.

In the French coverage, quotations are used to show lack of consistency or understanding. This method is best exemplified with the *Le Devoir* coverage of the Fairview protest (Chartier 1996). Below presented in tabular format is a summary of those comments. Along with the comments appear information about the speaker's ethnicity, expressed or implied, allowing the reader to make inferences.

	Name	From	Ethnicity	Opinion
1.	Donna Florence	Kirkland		Act now, before hard-liners.
2.	Olga Chiu	DDO	Hong Kong Chinese	It's our right. We don't need French.
3.	Roy Leavins	DDO		Give us a break. Let's have English again.
4.	Marguerite Labonté	Boisbriand	Bilingual Québécoise	We want two languages in our home.
5.	Doris Steen-Chevalier	Rosemere	Bilingual anglophone	We speak two languages at home, and want a bilingual catalogue from Sears.
6.	Deborah Joannou	St-Laurent	Greek origin	We're thinking of moving to Europe with our multilingual children.
7.	Amber Goodwyn	Pte-Claire	Jewish	HS student wanting signs in English and fairness.
8.	Ernerst Hershey		Old-stock anglophone	Government fascists are morons who make me sick.
9.	Ann Klein		Ethnic allophone	Mtl is nothing without ethnic groups.
10.	Mohamed Abden	works at Royal Vic	Arrived from Egypt in 1984	Don't make others use French.

The cumulative effect of ten protesters' complaints is to give the mainstream francophone audience the impression that it is not understood, nor do the most privileged members of Québec society want to cooperate in the mission of protecting French.

It is interesting to note that the *Gazette* version of this story (Seidman 1996) echoes this string of demonstrator interviews as a closing. The anglophone journalist, however, reports comments from only two interviews. A Rosemere shopper is

boycotting her local stores because there are not bilingual signs. A South Shore resident would like bilingual signs in his community too. The journalist then concludes that the protesters were critical of Alliance Quebec for not defending their language rights. Whereas the francophone journalist has sought a direct provocative conclusion, the anglophone reports an issue of accountability.

(7) Place of differing views

In *The Gazette*, differing views are the mark of an expected ethical standard. The anglophone community understands it is not the majority and wishes to cooperate with the francophone majority. In *Le Devoir*, differing views are used to show lack of consistency, understanding, or fairness. As examples, consider the quotations given in 6. The contrast achieved by using the minister's comments as a foil to those of the Equality Party MNA is typical of the balance anglophone writers attempt to achieve. At the same time, the series of complaints from ten disgruntled individuals is rather typical of *Le Devoir's* treatment of opposing views in the language portfolio.

(8) Vocabulary

In English, certain emotionally charged words have a persuasive effect on the reader. The pre-Bill 86 restrictions on bilingual posting are referred to as "banning English." Bill 86 will consequently "scrap the ban on English" (Authier, 1993, p. A1, my emphasis). At the end of this article, the reader is

reminded that "Quebec's sign law violates freedom of expression" (p. A2).

Reporting the Beaudoin communiqué, Authier (1996) announces, "The government plans to crack down . . ." Michael Hamelin of Alliance Quebec is paraphrased in this way:

> . . . but the new crackdown on corporations must not get out of hand because it will alienate investors. (p. A10)

In the same article, the Liberal critic doesn't want "harassment" (p. A10). Because of the images these expressions evoke, they dissuade the reader from identifying with the opponent's view.

In French, the vocabulary of warfare is evoked regularly, and often attributed to the opponent. In the coverage of the tabling of Bill 86, the minister makes an appeal for mutual respect rather than taking recourse to "coups de diktats législatifs" (Venne, 1993, p. A1). Describing the government's action, Venne reports:

> Il fait disparaître la Commission de la protection de la langue française, qu'on a appelé la police de la langue (p. A10)

Faire disparaître is a reference to totalitarian regimes who take away people and leave no trace. *La police de la langue* is presumably attributed to opponents of the *Commission*. The result of the tabling was for debate to "catch fire" in the National Assembly. In the same way, it will probably "explode" all over Québec in the coming weeks.

Reporting the content of the Beaudoin communiqué, Venne (1996, Apr 4, p. A8) confirms no further modification to the language legislation, which would be "sacrilege" for some and a

"can of worms" for others. The liberal critic is essentially in agreement but fears "witch hunts."

Finally, Chartier of *Le Devoir* (1996) reports that the Fairview Mall protesters were supporting *The Gazette* in its "combat" (p. A10). As previously mentioned, one complained his blood boiled because of the fascist government. He was sick to see those morons on October 30, 1995, date of the latest referendum, which also happened to be his 50th birthday.

(9) Reader impact

The impression that the three *Gazette* news stories leave the reader with is that, despite the struggle, anglophones are holding their own. Furthermore, the reader may take comfort in knowing the community is beyond reproach. The impression that the three *Devoir* news stories leave the reader with is frustration that the government will not take up the cause of the French language in the same way as the Parti Québécois of 1977. At the same time, the most privileged members of Québec society will choose not to cooperate in the majority's mission of protecting the language. The prospect is bleak.

(10) Factual *vs.* opinionated content in the editorials

In *The Gazette*, editorials consist of at least 40% of the sentences being the writer's opinion. In *Le Devoir*, the minimum is closer to one half. In *The Gazette*, this amount reaches 60% in one of the editorials, and in *Le Devoir*, also up to 60% in two. The amount of opinion can be attributed to the nature of the

event. In the case of the first two (Bill 86 and the Beaudoin communiqué), editorialists of both papers have made greater place for commentary, given the implications of legislated remedies. In the case of the Fairview demonstration, less commentary was required as the objectively observed behaviors presumably spoke for themselves.

If a reader has been following the news, the tone will already be set. It may also be of interest that the editorialists do not rely on any other information than that reported as news in their own newspapers.

11. Dramatic devices of editorials

There are examples of hyperbole, understatement, and irony used in the editorials. Hyperbole is the most prevalent. In *The Gazette's* editorial about Bill 86, controversy over Québec sign laws is called "wounding" and even appears in the title. One of the criticisms of the proposed legislation is "new loads of committee work and red tape" ("To end," p. B4). In the editorial about the Beaudoin communiqué, the anonymous writer (as are the other two *Gazette* editorialists) asserts, "English schools are slowly being suffocated in this province . . ." ("Balancing," p. B4). "A language crackdown," the same author warns, "would poison the climate . . . " Understatement is found in the editorial about the Fairview Mall demonstration. The journalist advises the department retailers "to show a little consideration" ("Signs," p. B4). The appeal is no doubt intended to be a reminder that the

customer is always right and to serve as a veiled threat since the stores cannot afford to lose customers.

Most striking are the examples of direct recourse to irony. About the original author of the French-language Charter, a *Gazette* editorialist says:

> Camille Laurin, for example, thinks that the very idea of letting the least smidgeon of English appear on commercial signs is heresy" ("To end," p. B4)

Of the appeal board for admission to English schools, "[It] has a disgraceful record of making up inane rules as it goes along" ("Balancing," p. B4).

In French, examples of these devices are prevalent, and likely used more regularly. Venne (1996, Apr 20 - 21) predicts, in reaction to the Fairview demonstration and anglophones' inability to understand the Québécois mainstream, a "boomerang effect," which appears as the title of his editorial. A veiled threat is implicit in this understatement. A boomerang implies control, but one thrown out of control may return to injure the player. In the same way, the anglophone community may provoke an uncontrollable backlash among mainstream Québécois.

As for examples of hyperbole and sarcasm, consider Bissonnette's (1993) editorial for the tabling of Bill 86. A prominent French-language journalist in the province, she laments the eroding of the French-language Charter. Implicit in her argument is that anything less than exclusive French unilingualism through legislation will compromise the protection of Québécois people and culture. The spirit of the proposal, she claims, is the antithesis of previous legislation, which will be reduced to

"shreds." Even more significant to her is the dismantling of the *CPLF*. She reminds her reader that opponents of the Charter are wont to call this agency the "language police." She evokes a traditional fear of the French-Canadian community that schools will assimilate children through new provisions of Bill 86 which permit English-language instruction in French schools.

Bissonnette underscores the part of the UN decision which supports linguistic management favoring French. This part of the ruling, she asserts, has been obscured by "collective guilt." Various figures of speech are indicative of her disapproval of the proposed legislation, which she judges a "travesty." She accuses the government of "careful sabotage" through its direct intervention in the language portfolio. The British tradition of arm's length, she muses, has "come down with a cold," and this to appease "ministerial appetite." She imputes a "subversive" end to a "twisted" law. Those celebrating the end of the notwithstanding clause have been, in her opinion, experiencing an "invented oppression." Her impression of the government's timing is "a false alarm simply to take maximum advantage of the [public's] lack of attention during the summer." Democratic concern, Bissonnette regrets in conclusion, will crash along with the principles of the French-language Charter. The "quick fix" of the new legislation will be short lived.

In both English and French, the effect of these dramatic devices is sarcasm. They are intended to erode the credibility of the opposing point of view.

Discussion

The analysis has revealed important differences between *Le Devoir* and *The Gazette* in the coverage of the language portfolio. In particular, the impact on readers as members of their respective ingroups is important. This can most readily be attributed to the legalistic approach to news coverage in French and to the one of observable facts in English. As for the common threads and contrasts presented in the analysis, it should be pointed out that they apply to the three newspaper events in question. Further research would be required to determine the extent of the generalizability, if any.

Perhaps the chronology of the events explains the relative consistency in how the impact is achieved in each newspaper. The prominence of the French-language Charter as an icon in Québec life was diminishing at the time of the publication of these articles. For the main-stream francophone community, there had been an erosion of the corner stone, in place since 1977, of their cultural affirmation. For the non-francophone community, the Charter had also been an icon, but indeed representing an aberration in Canadian life. This difference may explain the more positive outlook in *The Gazette* when compared to the frustration apparent in *Le Devoir*.

The research design of this study could be used to observe treatment of other news related to important events in the language portfolio. For instance, when the original French-language Charter was adopted in 1977, what was the impact of the newspapers on their respective readers at the time? Would the

Devoir writers have adopted an organization I have, in the current study, attributed to *The Gazette*? At the same time, would the *Gazette* writers have made more room for analysis and critique in this portfolio as the original legislation was about to be adopted? More recently, in a related story, there is a counter example to the factual front-page journalist style described in my analysis of the selected events. Reporting the second day of the supreme court challenge by the federal government to Québec's right to a unilateral declaration of independence, the banner headline in *Le Devoir* (Cornellier, 1998) reads *"Ottawa perd le contrôle du débat"* ("Ottawa Loses Control of the Debate"). The French headline begs attention indeed, but at the same time, it goes well beyond what would normally be considered objective journalism.

As for the issue as to whether the media is a suitable agent for language spread, I believe, based on this study, that it is not in the Québec government's best interest to adopt a pure *laissez-faire* approach towards the language portfolio if newspapers are a desired medium to achieve this end. Bolinger (1979) speaks of "metaphorical aggression." In the analysis, we have seen in both English and French a number of examples of this phenomenon. At the same time, however, the government cannot intervene directly. The ideal compromise would therefore be for the government to buy space in the newspapers so its message could reach members of the public directly without passing through the filter of the journalists, who are apt to mirror popular attitudes of their respective communities. Part of the government's message

would be advertising. Part would be regular columns written with the targeted audience in mind. To promote the French language to anglophones, the government (or the *OLF*) should consider a campaign in English in which prominent members of the anglophone community known to use French competently in public life could give live testimonials about the advantages of speaking French in Québec.

In any event, the government must develop a well-articulated clearly defined course of action for implementation. Without planning, exploitation of the media cannot succeed. The public, the government must assume, will be able to tell the difference between substance and veneer. In this regard, Venne from *Le Devoir* (1996, Apr. 5) is no doubt right. The current government often seems to lack clear direction in the language portfolio. Further indifference on the government's part to communicate with the anglophone community can be observed through the language(s) of certain services. Tax forms are available in English for example, but Québec's tourism office does not broadcast its campaign promoting restful country destinations on local English TV channels.

My recommendation, I concede, will be met with skepticism. Such an initiative can easily be dismissed as propaganda. The discussion about language is so seminal to life in Québec, however, that many residents would benefit from more substantive information. Consequently, the popular debate may be governed by greater rationalism and less emotionalism. In this way, the non-francophone minority will be able to make a better contribution to

the protection of the French language, and the majority, as awareness increases, will feel more secure in itself as the traditional fear of the outside threat is dispelled.

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